

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates.

The proposed loosening of media ownership rules is outrageous. The loosening in 1996 was a tremendous setback itself. Media are certainly important for informing, as a counterbalance to the power of governments, but a thin yet mighty media (e.g. A majority owned by 5 major corporations) lacks the diversity of voices needed to represent a democratic country. When media merge or collude, voices are inevitably drowned, and alternative (non-mainstream) views and cultures are, in the end, not represented in broadcasts.

I am the Secretary of the Board of Directors of Prairie Air, Inc., which solely owns and operates community radio WEFT 90.1fm in Champaign, IL. While I'm speaking for myself, the members of the Board as well as members and associates of the station generally share my views. In the community of Champaign-Urbana, there are a handful of radio stations, TV stations, a mainstream daily newspaper, and an alternative weekly newspaper. The commercial FM radio stations demonstrate very little diversity already, ranging from pop country to pop/rock. One company owns not only a few radio stations (including two frequencies that broadcast the same exact content) and the leading alternative weekly paper. Possibly the mainstream daily newspaper already owns an AM news station. The current state of media consolidation is bad enough, but to allow further consolidation would be simply wrong. When 30% of all American radio stations are owned by one company (Clear Channel), and organizations may setup repeaters in the community/public band (88-92 MHz) of stations that are not remotely local, especially when local organizations are vying to start their own radio stations, it's clear that the FCC has failed in protecting the airwaves, a public property and resource.